Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye) in Newborns

Erythromycin ointment is put in the eyes of all newborn babies in order to prevent eye infections. Please read this about different types of newborn eye infections. Some of these infections can be prevented with erythromycin ointment.

Many things can make the eyes red and sore. It can be hard to know what is causing the problem.

**Pink eye can be caused by:**

- Blocked tear duct
- Infection
- Germs (like gonorrhea or chlamydia) that moms can have without knowing it can pass to baby at birth
- Herpes can cause very bad eye damage and pass to baby at birth

**Symptoms can show up 1 day to 2 weeks after birth:**

- Eyelids are puffy, red, and tender
- Thick pus in the eyes

**Preventing and treating pink eye:**

- Most hospitals are required by state law to put drops or ointment in a newborn’s eyes to prevent eye infection.
- Most hospitals use antibiotic eye ointment or drops such as erythromycin.
- Some eye infections need to be treated with medicine in the eyes and by mouth or in a vein.
- For blocked tear ducts use gentle warm massage between the eye and nose.

Learn more:

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Health & Human Services
http://www.cdc.gov/conjunctivitis/newborns.html